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Public Health Update

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Updates

Measles

The United States is currently experiencing a large, multi-state outbreak of measles linked to an amusement park in California. The last confirmed case of measles in Maine was in 1997.

On January 23, 2015, US CDC issued a Health Advisory to notify public health departments and healthcare facilities about the multi-state outbreak and to provide guidance for healthcare providers nationwide (<http://emergency.cdc.gov/han/han00376.asp>).

Measles is highly contagious and spreads through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Measles can cause serious health complications, such as pneumonia or encephalitis, and even death. Children younger than 5 years of age and adults older than 20 years of age are at high risk of getting a serious case of measles. About 1 in 4 unvaccinated people in the U.S. who get measles will be hospitalized; about 1 in 500 may die.

Guidance for healthcare providers

- Ensure all patients are up to date on measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine.
- Consider measles in patients presenting with febrile rash illness and clinically compatible measles symptoms (cough, coryza, and conjunctivitis), and ask patients about recent travel internationally or to domestic venues frequented by international travelers, as well as a history of measles exposures in their communities.
- Promptly isolate patients with suspected measles to avoid disease transmission and immediately report the suspect measles case to the health department.
- Obtain specimens for testing from patients with suspected measles, including viral specimens for genotyping, which can help determine the source of the

virus. Contact the local health department with questions about submitting specimens for testing.

For more information, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/measles/>

Flu

Flu is widespread in Maine with lab-confirmed cases reported in all counties. A total of 26 new outbreaks were reported during the week ending January 31, 2015.

Maine CDC still strongly recommends a flu vaccine if you haven't already been vaccinated. Although the vaccine is not a good match to the strain of flu circulating the most in the U.S., getting vaccinated may offer some level of protection from symptoms. The vaccine also provides protection against three other strains of flu.

Clinical recommendations and guidelines are available in health alerts issued Dec. 5 (available at <http://go.usa.gov/F4Vd>), Jan. 6 (available at <http://go.usa.gov/t23C>), and Jan. 15 (<http://go.usa.gov/JXyY>).

Weekly updates on flu cases are available online:

- for Maine: <http://go.usa.gov/NoK>
- for the US: <http://go.usa.gov/ITB>
- for the world: <http://go.usa.gov/ITK>

Maine CDC reminds everyone to take everyday preventive measures against the flu:

- Wash your hands frequently.
- Cough and sneeze into your elbow or into a tissue. Throw the tissue away.
- Stay home when you feel sick.
- Get vaccinated. To find a flu vaccine in your area, search <http://flushot.healthmap.org/> or contact your health care provider or pharmacy.

If you have the flu:

- Stay home if you are sick, until you are fever-free for a full 24 hours without taking fever-reducing medicine.
- Cough and sneeze into your elbow or into a tissue. Throw the tissue away.
- Contact your PCP if you have signs of the flu to discuss possible treatment with antivirals.
- Although most people can stay home to recover without seeing a health care provider, **it is possible for healthy people to develop severe illness from the flu. Anyone with the flu should seek medical attention for:**
 - Dehydration
 - Trouble breathing
 - Getting better, then suddenly getting a lot worse
 - Any major change in condition

For more information, go to
www.maine flu.gov or <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>

Heart attack and stroke: Do you know what to do?

A heart attack or a stroke can happen to anyone at any time. 1,145 Maine people died from a heart attack and stroke in 2011. The best thing you can do for someone having a heart attack or stroke is call 911 immediately.

Heart Attack

A heart attack happens when the blood flow to the heart is greatly reduced or completely blocked. On average, there is a death caused by heart attack about every minute in the United States. Most people do not know the symptoms of a heart attack and know to call 911. These symptoms include:

- Pain or discomfort in the chest, jaw, neck, back, arms or shoulders
- Shortness of breath
- Feeling weak, lightheaded, faint or sweaty

Stroke

A stroke happens when the blood flow to a part of the brain is blocked. This year almost 800,000 Americans of all ages will suffer stroke, which is the fourth leading cause of death in the country. Most people do not know the symptoms of a stroke and to call 911. These symptoms include sudden:

- Numbness in the face, arm or leg
- Slurred speech
- Blurred vision
- Dizziness or loss of balance
- Severe headache

Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA)

SCA happens when the heart stops beating without any warning. When this happens, blood flow stops to the brain and other body organs. If not treated within minutes, the person will die.

The best way to get the heart pumping again quickly before help arrives is to use an Automated External Defibrillator (AED). It works by sending an electric shock to the heart to try and restore its normal rhythm. They are safe, easy to use, and can be lifesaving.

Be Prepared

Only skilled medical professionals can determine if someone is having a heart attack, stroke or sudden cardiac arrest. Your responsibility is to recognize the symptoms and act quickly. You can help to prepare yourself by taking a CPR/AED course that can teach you critical skills needed to respond and manage these medical emergencies until emergency medical services arrive. These courses are offered by [Maine Adult Education](#), [American Heart Association](#), and [American Red Cross](#).

For more information about heart attack and stroke visit:
<http://mainehearthealth.org/>.

Public health workforce

Maine CDC and the Hanley Center for Health Leadership have been working together and with many organizations statewide and across the New England region to focus on improving the capacity, knowledge, and performance of Maine's current and future public health workforce. The goal is to develop highly engaged and skilled workforce to lead Maine's efforts to accomplish its public health goals.

Shifting priorities in public health, changes in the delivery of health care, and rapidly evolving technology have driven the need for workforce and capacity development. A comprehensive Public Health Workforce Development Plan has been drafted for Maine CDC. The final version of the plan is expected to be available by April 2015. One element of this plan is the creation and sharing of a series of online educational training sessions. The first four trainings are now available; the topics are: Foundations of Public Health, Bedbugs; Drinking Water and Public Wells; and Lyme Disease. Many additional trainings will be made available over the next year and ongoing.

Public health and other health professionals are encouraged to participate in this program. To access the trainings, go to <http://mcdc.trainingserver6.net/login/index.php>, choose Create a New Account and follow the simple instructions on how to register. Along with the presentation and quiz questions, an evaluation form and certificate of completion are also available online. Feedback is welcome and encouraged, as it will be used to inform future trainings and to ensure that all trainings are as useful and as effective as possible.

For more information about this program, please e-mail christine.zukas@maine.gov. We look forward to your participation and feedback.

Pertussis (whooping cough)

Cases of pertussis (whooping cough) continue to be reported statewide.

So far this year, 53 cases have been reported in Maine, as of February 3, 2015. The majority of the cases are in school-aged children.

Maine CDC encourages providers who see patients for cough in an outbreak area to treat empirically for pertussis and test. Providers do not need to wait for positive results to return or a 2-week history of cough.

DTaP vaccine is recommended for all infants and children. Tdap vaccine is recommended for all preteens, teens, and adults.

For more guidance and information, visit
<http://go.usa.gov/dCO>

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- Facebook (www.facebook.com/MaineCDC)
- Twitter (<http://twitter.com/MEPublicHealth>)
- Blog (<http://mainepublichealth.blogspot.com>)

For clinical consultation and outbreak management guidance, call Maine CDC's toll-free 24-hour phone line: 1-800-821-5821

For questions and potential exposure to poison, call the Poison Center's 24-hour phone line: 1-800-222-1222

For road conditions, closures, and detours: call 5-1-1 or visit www.511maine.gov.

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